Course Syllabus

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Economics 452: Religion, Ethics, and Economics -- Spring 2022

Professor: Mahmoud A. El-Gamal
(http://www.ruf.rice.edu/%7Eelgamal)

Classes: MW 2:00--3:15 KRF 105 Online first two weeks, Jan 10-23, check Zoom tab for links

Office Hours: M 12:30--1:30 KRF 429

TA: Ritika Sethi (mailto:rs98@rice.edu)

Course Description:

This course is a research seminar on the interactions between religion, ethics, and economics. Topics include empirical tests of classical theories such as the secularization and Weberian hypotheses, as well as more recent models of the economics of religion and the economic effects of religiosity.

Students will work in groups on small projects to replicate and/or extend empirical results in some of the readings that we will discuss throughout the semester. Student will also write individual term papers on topics of their choice subject to approval of the professor.

While supplementary readings are recommended (i.e. not required), some selected readings may prove helpful for your team projects and individual term papers.

An excellent source for data and term paper ideas:

- theArDA (http://www.thearda.com)

Readings:

- Papers under Files tab

Recommended supplementary readings:

- Witham, Larry. *Marketplace of the Gods: How Economics Explains Religion*, Oxford University Press, 2010
- McCleary, Rachel and Robert Barro. *The Wealth of Religions: The Political Economy of Believing and Belonging*, Princeton University Press, 2019

- Bowles, Samuel. *The Moral Economy: Why Good Incentives Are No Substitute for Good Citizens*, Yale University Press, 2016
- Bellah, Robert. The Robert Bellah Reader, Duke University Press, 2006 at **https://read.dukeupress.edu/books/book/2105/The-Robert-Bellah-Reader (https://read.dukeupress.edu/books/book/2105/The-Robert-Bellah-Reader)**

Tentative syllabus:

- **Week 1 -- January 10, 12: Economics of religion, and economic consequences of religion**
  - Religion, Economics & Survey Data: Iannaccone (*Journal of Economic Literature*, 1998), McCleary and Barro (*Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 2006)
  - Religion, Ethics, and Income Inequality: Alesina and Giuliano (*Handbook of Social Economics*, 2011), Guiso et al (*Journal of Monetary Economics*, 2003)
- **Week 2 -- January 19: Ethics, religion, and economics**
  - Ethics in Economics Experiments: Bowles (SFI, 2000), Bowles (*Science*, 2008), Henrich et al. *(American Economic* Review, 2001), Henrich et al. (*Science*, 2010), Fehr et al. (*American Economic Review*, 2006)
  - Market Ethics, Diversity, and Trust: Bruni and Sugden (*Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 2013), Putnam (*Review of Political Economy*, 2003), Glaeser et al. (*The Economic Journal*, 2002)
- **Week 3 -- January 24, 26: Getting, keeping, and switching religion**
  - Utility and human capital: Azzi and Ehrenberg (*Journal of Political Economy*, 1975), Iannaccone (*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*,1990)
  - Pascal's Wager, multiple religions: Durkin and Greely (*Rationality and Society*, 1991), Montgomery (*American Economic Review*, 1996), Montgomery (*Rationality and Society*, 1996), Montgomery (*American Sociological Review*, 2003), McBride (*American Journal of Sociology*, 2008)
- **Week 4 -- January 31, Feb 2: Church, sect, and secular society**
  - Iannaccone (*American Journal of Sociology*, 1988), Iannaccone (*Journal of Political Economy*, 1992)
  - Putnam (*Scandinavian Political Studies*, 2007), Algan and Cahuc (Working Paper, 2013)
- **Week 5 -- February 7, 9: Group Project Presentations I**
  - Team projects presentations
- **Week 6 -- February 14, 16: Religious regulation**
  - Religious subsidies and taxes: Berman (*Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2000), Ekelund, Hebert and Tollison (*Journal of Political Economy*, 2002)
  - Government regulation of religion: Barro and McCleary (*Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2005), Iannaccone, Finke, and Stark (*Economic Inquiry*, 1997), Voas et al. (*American Sociological Review*, 2002

- **Week 7 -- February 21, 23: Religion, attitudes, and consequences**
  - Reexamining the Weberian hypothesis: Becker and Woessman (*Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2009), Guiso et al. (*Journal of Monetary Economics*, 2003)
  - Religious shaping of preferences: Gruber (*Advances in Economic Analysis and Policy*, 2005), van Hoorn and Maseland (*Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 2013), Scheve and Stasavage (*Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 2006), Guiso et al. (*Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 2006)
- **Week 8 -- Feb 28, March 2: Group Project Presentations II**
  - Core bibliography, data set, and summary of proposed individual papers due
  - Second set of team projects presentations (assignment will be posted and discussed early in Week 6)
- **Week 9 -- March 7, 9: Religion, attitudes, happiness, and risk taking**
  - Religion, trust, and cooperation: Berggren and Bjornskov (*Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 2011), Gorodnichenko and Roland (*American Economic Review*, 2011), Anderson and Mellor (*Economics Letters*, 2009)
  - Religion & macro, corporate, and market behavior: Kumar, Page, and Spalt (*Journal of Financial Economics*, 2011), Hilary and Hui (*Journal of Financial Economics*, 2009)
- **Week 10 -- March 21, 23: Religion, fundamentalism, politics, and economics**
  - Religion, political participation, and economic attitudes: Gill (*Annual Review of Political Science*, 2001), Gaskins, Golder and Siegel (*American Journal of Political Science*, 2013), Chen and Li (*American Economic Review*, 2009), Gruber and Hungerman (*Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2008)
  - Religion, gender, and trust: Emmenegger and Manow (*Politics and Society*, 2014), Tan (*Economics Letters*, 2006), Tan and Vogel (*Journal of Economic Psychology*, 2008)
- **Week 11 -- March 28, 30: Group Project Presentations III**
  - Third set of team projects presentations (assignment will be posted and discussed early in Week 9)
- **Week 12 -- April 4, 6: Individual Student presentations (term paper synopses)**
- **Week 13 -- April 11, 13: Individual Student presentations (term paper synopses)**
- **Week 14 -- April 18, 20: Individual Student presentations (term paper synopses)**

Grading:

- Class participation: 20%
- Team project presentations: 30%
- Individual term paper presentation: 20%
- Term paper: 30%

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Mon Jan 10, 2022	ECON 452 001 Sp22	2pm to 3:15pm
Wed Jan 12, 2022	ECON 452 001 Sp22	2pm to 3:15pm
Mon Jan 17, 2022	ECON 452 001 Sp22	2pm to 3:15pm
Wed Jan 19, 2022	ECON 452 001 Sp22	2pm to 3:15pm